



It is a vital national imperative for the United States to set our nation's space program on an ambitious, yet sustainable, path. Only by reaching consensus on our long-term goals in space and the short-term steps needed to achieve those goals can our nation reap the enormous technological and economic benefits of space and maintain our competitiveness as a nation.

The Space Exploration Alliance (the "SEA") is today reaffirming its longstanding and unwavering commitment to further space exploration and development, by calling on the Executive and Legislative branches to reach consensus on a unified and comprehensive human spaceflight program that will allow our nation to conduct missions of exploration beyond Low Earth Orbit. Our nation's leaders need to continue to embrace the broad, bi-partisan support which led to the enactment of the NASA Authorization Act of 2010. Only by working together, and with NASA, can Congress and the Administration determine the best path forward relative to our civil space program, including how best to leverage the necessary partnership between the public and private sectors relative to launch capabilities and new uses of space to improve life on Earth, and how best to maintain our skilled work force.

As Congress and the Administration continue to work together, the Space Exploration Alliance urges that the following concepts be included in the new plan:

- 1. Launch Capacity:** As reflected in the Authorization Act, it is critical that selection and development of the next generation of crewed launch vehicle commence in the very near term. Development must begin on a launch vehicle with sufficient lift capacity to allow NASA to mount crewed missions beyond Low Earth Orbit. SEA maintains that development should commence no later than 2012. The missions that the launch vehicle will be slated to accomplish must be identified and sufficient funding must be provided to achieve those missions. The design of the vehicle should be mission-enabling and mission-enhancing, while at the same time being focused on efficiency, affordability, and sustainability.
- 2. Private Sector:** With the impending retirement of the Space Shuttle, and until new American capabilities come on line, the United States will have to rely on the Russian Soyuz for access to the International Space Station (the "ISS"). During this time, we will be paying millions of dollars to the Russian government to launch American astronauts into space. The commercial launch industry must be supported in its efforts to provide American access to the ISS and our national laboratory in space. In addition to sending supplies to ISS, these commercial entities must also be allowed to demonstrate whether they will be capable of sending crews safely to Low Earth orbit as well. Commercial cargo/crew access to Low Earth Orbit would not only provide for full utilization of the Space Station, but it also could lead to dramatic reductions in the price of launches. It would also allow NASA to concentrate on exploration beyond Low Earth Orbit and provide NASA with a higher return on its science/exploration budget.
- 3. Timelines and Destinations:** SEA calls for Congress and the Administration to establish firm timelines and destinations for future human space exploration activities. SEA believes that we should set a goal to send humans to at least one intermediate destination **beyond low Earth orbit, such as an asteroid or the Moon, within the next ten years, and for NASA to develop a plan to land**

humans on Mars by **no later than 2030**. By doing so, the United States will continue to maintain its technological lead in space, rather than abrogating that role to other countries that today have active human spaceflight programs that seek to supplant us.

4. **Technology and Applications:** SEA supports the focus on research and development of innovative, and enabling technologies, including **advanced propulsion, in-space refueling, energy production, and In Situ Resource Utilization (the utilization of indigenous resources on the Moon, asteroids or Mars)**. These technologies will not only provide the means to explore space, but will also lead to numerous and groundbreaking applications which will improve life on Earth and will also benefit our national **competitiveness**. SEA calls on NASA to define and prioritize the most promising technology concepts to advance human space exploration.

5. **Sustainability:** Our future path in space, if it is to succeed, requires a sustained, generational commitment to NASA's long-term mission. It also requires incentives for private sector and international participation. SEA acknowledges the financial constraints under which the U.S. government will be operating over the next few years. Tax dollars should be spent wisely, which is why we are making these requests. The Space Exploration Alliance looks forward to continuing to work with Congress and the Administration to guarantee that the United States remains the leader in space exploration and development. As we lead the way into the solar system, new American growth industries will be spawned, **our nation's youth will be inspired to pursue careers in math, science, and engineering, and our country will enjoy a re-invigoration of its economy**. The United States must not allow itself to be left behind.

The Space Exploration Alliance is a partnership of the nation's premier non-profit space advocacy organizations, which collectively represent the voices of thousands of people throughout the United States and from all walks of life. The members of SEA believe that a strong and focused space exploration program is a compelling national priority that is technically and fiscally achievable, will inspire the nation's youth and the public, will reinvigorate the traditional aerospace workforce and industrial base, and will foster job-creating entrepreneurial activity across the entire economy. For more information on the SEA, visit www.spaceexplorationalliance.org.

